

North Cumberland Fire District

Meeting Minutes

October 20, 2010

Present:

Edward LeBlanc, Chairman

John Aharonian

Brian Campbell

Matthew Gannon

Paul Lindquist

John Patrick McCoy

Michael Spaziani

Absent:

Robert Audette

Others Present:

Fay Dakake, Clerk

Martin Klara, Tax Collector

Robert J. Murray, Treasurer

David DelVecchio, Chief

Opening:

The regular meeting of the North Cumberland Fire District (NCFD) was called to order at 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday, October 20, 2010 by Chairman LeBlanc.

A note of appreciation from trustee Robert Audette, who recently lost his son, Gary, in an unfortunate accident was read aloud. A moment of reflection was observed for Mr. Audette and his family.

With an over-capacity of residents in attendance, Chairman LeBlanc offered to adjourn the meeting and reconvene another night, either this week or next, at an alternative location. Although Chairman LeBlanc advanced against the following exchange, resident Arthur Lambi asked if there were any residents who would like to leave in order for the meeting to be held. Several residents voluntarily left the meeting. Chairman LeBlanc advised it was not the intention of the

Board to exclude anyone.

A. Approval of the Minutes

The clerk's report dated September 15, 2010 was reviewed.

Motion was made by Mr. Campbell, seconded by Mr. Lindquist, to accept the clerk's report for September 15, 2010. All in favor. So voted.

B. Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Murray submitted his report, offered copies to all those in attendance and highlighted the following:

- Month of September Profit & Loss**

Revenue Side

- o Total Revenue \$486,751. compared to a budget of \$476,540. Primarily from taxes collected totaling \$481,179. in comparison to a budget of \$475,000.**
- o Taxes collected in September total \$481,179. Collections in September 2009 totaled \$403,000.**
- o For the year \$581,299. collected vs. \$422,000. in 2009.**
- o Year-to-date 2010, 30% of taxes collected vs. 25% in 2009**

Expense Side

- o Total expenses for the month \$157,855. vs. a budget of \$157,960.**
- o Account # 6000 Gas, Diesel and Oil - \$2413., higher than budget, due to the timing of invoices.**
- o Account # 6010 Truck Repairs – \$665. Over budget for the month, attributable to \$1,000. in repairs to the Grand Cherokee**
- o Account # 6030 Upgrading & Pur New Equipment – \$3053. Purchase of two ground saws and chain loops**
- o Account # 6200 Payroll - \$97,734. Five pay periods, includes \$20,000. in overtime**
- o Account # 6210 Social Security & Medicare – \$7673., on budget**
- o Account # 6220 Pension – \$13,444. Expected increase mandated by the state pension plan from 21% of salary to 23% beginning July 2011.**

Overall, slightly under budget. Five accounts make up 90% of the overall expenditures for the month, Payroll, Social Security, Pension, Blue Cross/Delta Dental and Training Tuition Reimbursement. All totaled: \$140,879., or 90% of the expenditures for September. In summary, revenue exceeded expenditures by \$328,896. vs. a budget of \$318,580. Therefore, ahead for the month \$10,416.

• September Year-To-Date Profit and Loss

o Total Revenue \$608,297. Expenditures \$554,902. Revenue exceeding expenditures by \$53,395 for the 3 months ending September 30, 2010.

- o **Cautionary items marked in yellow for year to date, spend vs. budget, for the entire fiscal year.**

- **Balance Sheet**

- o **Total cash ending September 30th: \$408,952. vs. \$149,640. at the end of August.**

- o **Accrued Expenses \$174,696. (inclusive of \$84,150. for water hydrant fees)**

- **NCFD 2009/2010 Payroll Overtime**

- o **Overtime accumulated to \$68,563 over the last 3 months equaling 31.72% of standard pay, in comparison to last year of \$64,982. at 34.6%.**

Motion was made by Mr. McCoy, seconded by Mr. Spaziani, to accept the Treasurer's report. All in favor. So voted.

C. Tax Collector's Report

Tax Collector Klara submitted his report dated October 2010. Taxes collected in September for 2011/2010 total \$472,472. Total deposited for the month of September \$481,179.80

With many tax payments arriving daily, as well as many telephone inquiries, approximately 1,000. checks await processing.

Motion was made by Mr. Gannon, seconded by Mr. Lindquist, to accept the Tax Collector's report dated October, 2010. All in favor. So voted.

D. Chief's Report/Monthly Expenditures

Chief DelVecchio submitted his monthly report for September 2010 and highlighted the following:

- o Letter of recognition from Lt. Peter McIntyre from Cumberland Rescue; it praised firefighters Chris Baker, Chris Smith, Paul Foisy and Lt. Paquin for their quick response, quality care and rapid safe transport provided to the victim of a serious bicyclist/motor vehicle accident. A letter of recognition from NCFD was placed in each of their personnel files.**
- o Firefighter sustained minor injury to his wrist responding to a natural gas leak, was placed on IOD, and since is back to duty.**
- o An updated expenses report was presented for the official record and circulated to all board members.**
- o Fire Recovery USA (3rd party billing agency) collected \$12, 516. to date. An additional \$2415. has been invoiced. Another \$495. under review. An insurance company denial of \$3405. is undergoing further review.**

Motion was made by Mr. Campbell, seconded by Mr. Spaziani, to accept the Chief's Report for September 2010 with expenses. All in favor. So voted.

An interruption in the meeting occurred; several residents outside the windows of the schoolhouse requested that the windows be opened in order for them to hear the meeting. Chairman LeBlanc asked that they enter. He informed those in attendance that the Board did not want to exclude anyone and that he was genuinely happy that they were in attendance but the meeting could not be held over capacity. He offered for the Board to adjourn and reconvene later this week or next week for the monthly meeting at an alternative location. Many residents left voluntarily and the meeting continued.

E. Committee Reports

Financial Management, Budget, Taxes

Mr. McCoy noted 92% collection of last year's taxes, close to the estimated 93% used when calculating the budget.

Apparatus/Buildings/Grounds

Mr. Aharonian had nothing to report.

Personnel Committee

Chairman LeBlanc reported a memorandum of agreement has been signed to settle Grievance 10-04.

Labor Management/ Negotiations

Chairman LeBlanc presented Mr. Campbell with a letter from the Union asking that the collective bargaining process begin for a

new labor contract.

As Chairperson of the Negotiating Committee representing the District, Mr. Campbell announced other committee members, Mr. LeBlanc and Mr. Spaziani. He reported they met with the Union on an issue where overtime has been paid in filling a vacancy any time a fire marshal or deputy chief was absent. Relief on this issue was asked by the Committee. The Union has agreed to not fill a vacancy if one, or the other, the deputy chief or the fire marshal, is out, but not both.

Negotiations will begin mid-November for the new labor contract.

Mr. Gannon believes the Labor Management Committee will meet before the next monthly meeting.

F. Old Business

Health Insurance for Retired Chief Carpenter

A letter was sent to retired Chief Carpenter formally notifying him that he is required to produce a copy of an agreement, allegedly signed in 1997, that provides for the District to cover his medical insurance, by December 1, 2010. If such agreement is not provided, his medical insurance will be terminated on December 1, 2010.

Follow-Up from Resident Peter Nigro

As a follow up to Mr. Nigro comments at last month's meeting, Mr. Nigro addressed the Board to explain that although the refinancing of

Engine 5 is probably a good idea, it is not the real issue. Mr. Nigro reported statistics compiled by one of his students. He believes fire protection should be looked at from an efficiency and equity prospective.

G. New Business

Tax Collection Clarification

Chairman LeBlanc explained the tax collector works more hours in October to get checks cashed. In the past, the board has looked at hiring an additional person, temporarily, to help get checks processed quickly. The cost of hiring, training and bonding seemed to outweigh the benefit.

Proposals of Mr. Arthur Lambi

Mr. Lambi distributed a copy of his proposed additions and amendments to the by-laws to the board and delivered a petition signed by tax payers requesting a special meeting.

Questions were of asked of Mr. Lambi to further explain his proposed additions and amendments to the by-laws. Discussion ensued.

Motion was made by Mr. Spaziani, seconded by Mr. Campbell, that the Board concur with the proposed additions to the by-laws (item 1 on the review issue and item 2 on the increase and advertising issue)

that it is agreed to in principal, and refined wording will be presented to the Board at the next meeting for debate and approval. All in favor. So voted.

The Board does not have the authority to change the proposed amendments to the by-laws; they are set in the charter that is provided by the State Legislature. Once they are approved by the Board and the residents, they need to be introduced into the Legislature through local representatives. The legislature has to approve a change to the charter and once the charter is changed then there is effectively a by-law change.

Motion was made by Mr. Gannon, seconded by Mr. Lindquist, to move the quorum from 30 to 50. All in favor. So voted.

The Board did not move on Mr. Lambi's proposed amendment to Article III, Section 2, to replace subsection (a).

Chairman LeBlanc advised Mr. Lambi that there is a process he can pursue to get his proposed amendments adopted without the approval of the Board.

As requested in the petition, a special meeting will be held December 1, 2010 at a location to be determined in the District. Chairman LeBlanc offered to have a qualified, professional, independent moderator, that is not a member of the District, at the special meeting.

Chairman LeBlanc would like to discuss Mr. Lambi's recommendations to refinance Engine 5 and to reduce the trustee's fees at the next monthly meeting. Mr. Lambi agreed.

H. Public Comment

Mr. Lambi and Chief DeVecchio each gave their account of what transpired at the petition signing meeting.

Conversation took place between Mr. Lambi and Chairman LeBlanc regarding Chief DeVecchio's salary.

Mr. Lambi requested year-to-date budget numbers, compared to year-to-date actual numbers. Treasurer Murray agreed.

Mr. Lambi spoke to Union negotiations, urging the Board not rush into negotiations and to consider alternative pension and health plans, paid time off and reducing truck manpower in the evening to reduce overtime.

Mr. Lambi requested a monthly health insurance invoice. Due to HIPPA regulations, Treasurer Murray offered the front page of the invoice, not to include names. Mr. Lambi also requested legal invoices.

Mr. Lambi addressed:

Unpaid property taxes as of June 30, 2010

Union concessions

Capping of health insurance

Effect in quality and tax rate with consolidation

Hydrant fees

Truck Refinancing

Distributed Cumberland Fire Comparative Expenses Report

Resident Kevin Sullivan of 5 North Hereford Drive asked if the board has looked at hiring temporary help, which does not have to be bonded, to deal with some of the administrative duties of the tax collector to allow him to focus on incoming checks.

Resident Tom Ward of Little Pond County Road commented that Town Hall bills go to a separate company to have checks cleared rapidly. He questioned ways to outsource the processing of checks.

Resident Arthur Lambi suggested an intern, at minimum wage, to photo copy the checks as they come in, prepare the deposit, reconcile the photocopy package with the deposit and then have the tax collector post those payments at a later date.

Resident Alan Green of 23 Larchwood Drive commented; he agreed that the refinance of the fire truck is not THE issue, but it is AN issue

and asked the Board not to sell it short.

Resident Donald Lussier of 6 Lantern Lane expressed his feelings that the Board is not doing their job in managing the district's dollars and they are letting the taxpayers down. He suggested a larger hall for the next meeting.

Resident Norman Bazinet of 104 Sleepy Hollow Drive commented on overtime.

In light of hearing Mr. Nigro's report, resident Joseph Bonnici of 99 Sleepy Hollow Drive asked if it would be feasible to come up with a plan to cut costs by 10% for the coming year and to include community involvement.

Chairman LeBlanc responded that all discretionary costs including the salaries of the trustees were cut by 10% last year and noted that most of the expenses are fixed costs by contract. He explained there is a finance committee on the Board and at each annual meeting the budget is reviewed, line item by line item, and the community, which has not been very involved in the past, is welcome to comment and vote.

Discussion ensued between resident Peter Nigro and Chief DelVecchio regarding whether Cumberland, as a whole, has optimal fire protection and rescue service. Mr. Nigro would like to see

coordination across the four departments in town to reduce costs.

Chairman LeBlanc explained the history and protocol followed in the purchasing of Engine 5.

Tom Meyers of 11 Stagecoach Road asked that planning for the next meeting be done in advance and at a location with adequate seating.

Tax Collector Klara was excused from the meeting at 8:11pm.

Trustee Lindquist, Chairman of the last Consolidation Committee done 2.5 years ago gave a synopsis of what transpired during that study as well as explained a study done in 1999 by an outside firm.

Tom Ward suggested the board adopt the mind set of how to run the department with 0% increase for the next three years.

Trustee Campbell gave an overview of his experience and the past negotiation committee members. Mr. LeBlanc and Mr. Spaziani offered their involvement and education as well.

Chairman LeBlanc requested a copy of the presentation that Mr. Lambi gave at his petition signing meeting. Mr. Lambi agreed.

Adjournment

**Motion was made by Mr. Campbell, seconded by Mr. Spaziani and
unanimously carried to adjourn the public meeting at 10:35 p.m.**

Minutes submitted by: Fay Dakake, Clerk

Approved by: Edward LeBlanc, Chairman
